

# Maurice Hinchey NEWS

## 26<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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### **HINCHEY AMENDMENT PROVIDES \$150 MILLION MORE FOR APPLE GROWERS**

WASHINGTON - An amendment authored by U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey to provide \$150 million in aid to apple growers was approved by the House Appropriations Committee late Wednesday afternoon. The funds are intended to compensate the growers for devastating market losses during the 2000 crop year.

"The US apple industry is suffering serious financial hardship for the fifth straight year," said Hinchey. "Though the causes can be attributed to a variety of factors, the essence of the problem is low prices, compounded by bad weather and plant diseases. The apple growers of America are teetering on the edge and are in great danger of going out of business if they don't get some help."

U.S. apple growers have sustained losses of \$1.5 billion over the past five years, including an estimated \$500 million during the past year alone. In 1998, apple prices fell more than 20 percent in a single year, to their lowest point in over a decade. Prices never rebounded in 1999, and were hard hit again in 2000.

Last year Hinchey, who is a member of the Agriculture Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, secured \$100 million for market loss in the fiscal year 2001 Agriculture spending bill. That marked the first time the federal government provided compensation for apple growers. Checks distributing the FY '01 funds are being sent to farmers this week.

The amendment was approved by the full Appropriations Committee on Wednesday by a vote of 34-24. Fellow New Yorkers on the committee Rep. James Walsh and Rep. John Sweeney agreed to cosponsor Hinchey's amendment. The FY '02 Agriculture Appropriations bill is expected to be considered by the full House in late June.

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